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Screen, "*Autumn*"

Ogata Korin (d. 1716)

Screens by Korin and Sotatsu.

THERE are now on exhibition at the west end of the Japanese Corridor three screens painted by Korin (d. 1717) and two by Sotatsu (flourished during early part or middle of seventeenth century).

The two by Sotatsu represent groups of different colored chrysanthemums upon a plain gold background, the petals of the flowers being slightly moulded in order to make them stand out more strongly. In the arrangement of his masses and color combinations, as well as in his truthfulness to nature, Sotatsu here clearly shows us why it is that the Japanese consider him their greatest flower painter.

The two screens by Korin, Spring and Autumn, are painted in the master's more youthful style, when he was still strongly under the influence of Sotatsu, yet in many places we already find promise of that bold originality of treatment which in after years caused the name of Korin to

become a synonym for the audacious. The treatment of the two central panels of Autumn is especially fine in its virile strength.

On the opposite wall we have, in the famous "Wave screen," Korin at the zenith of his power, fearing neither gods nor men in the exercise of his imagination. In this work we recognize the hand of the artist in lacquer who in his ink boxes and inro was wont to embed great masses of pewter, silver, gold and mother-of-pearl amidst the delicate tracery of detail, even as he has here shown in a vivid mass of iridescent green, the pine-clad rocks of Matsushima rising from foam-capped waves. At first sight we are dazed by the conventionality of the treatment, the green rocks, the great splash of golden sea-mist and the tortured writhing of the waters; yet as we become more familiar with the scene there gradually steals upon us a realization of the great mystery and force of ocean, and we recognize, despite the unfamiliarity of method, that he who executed this masterpiece of decorative art truly knew the vital spirit of his subject.



"Wave Screen" (Weld Collection)

Ogata Korin (d. 1716)



Screen, "Spring"

Ogata Korin (d. 1716)

Tibetan and other Lamaist Paintings.

BUDDHISM first reached Tibet about the middle of the seventh century. Sron Tsan Gampo, the then reigning sovereign of the Forbidden Land, being converted to the Indian religion by his two Buddhist wives, one a Chinese princess and the other a daughter of the king of Nepal, who later, under the titles of the White and the Green Taras, were considered as incarnations of the spiritual consort or creative energy of Avalokitesvara.

The Buddhism which was thus introduced into Tibet was of the Mahayana or so-called Northern school, which had already become overlaid with the metaphysical concepts of Yoga and Sivaic mysticism. To the vast array of Mahayana deities arising out of the personification of each varying mood of the Buddhas and Bodhisatvas as an individual god, Guru Padma-sambhava, in the middle of the eighth century, added innumerable devils and magicians of the native Bön pantheon, whom he claimed to have vanquished and bound over as defenders of the church on the promise of perpetual food and worship.

St. Padma founded an order of priestly exorcists to minister to these various gods and demons and to stand between them and the people, thus originating the sacred order of Lamas and establishing a debased system of demonology and magic which, under the title of Lamaism, still remains the state religion of Tibet and Mongolia.

In the second half of the thirteenth century Khubilai Khan, thinking thus best to weld together the outlying districts of his empire, adopted Lamaism as the state religion of China and appointed the abbot of Saskya monastery head of the church and tributary ruler of Tibet, a position held by him until early in the seventeenth century, when the fifth descendant of Tson-ka-pa, founder of the Ge-lug-pa or Yellow-Cap sect, seized the priest-kingship under the title of Dalai Lama.

This sect it is which, under the fiction of the constantly recurrent incarnation of Avalokitesvara as Dalai Lama, holds the ignorant and superstitious inhabitants of Tibet in thrall to-day.

All the paintings now on exhibition in the Japanese Corridor are executed in water color pigments mixed with glue upon a sort of cotton canvas, the somewhat oily appearance of some of them being doubtless due to the custom of burning "butter incense" in Lamaist temples.

Number 1 represents a saint of the Yellow Cap sect, conjuring from his skull bowl the Eight Fierce Demons and their attendants. Although somewhat crude in execution, this painting is very interesting as showing but little trace of academic formalism. The treatment is forcible and spontaneous, while the color harmony is of masterly richness.

Numbers 2 to 6, which are almost entirely Indian in feeling, are extraordinarily rich examples of color harmony and vigorous drawing. *Number 4* represents one of the manifestations of Tara seated upon a lotus throne, supported by a rock rising from the waters of a lake. On the shores of the lake grow jewelled trees, amidst which and in the heavens above appear various deities and angels riding on beasts earthly and celestial. In one hand Tara bears an arrow and in the other a bowl filled with flaming jewels. *Number 2* represents Yama, king of hell, with his spouse Yami, who offers her Lord a human skull filled with brains. Yama stands upon a green boar, who in turn bestrides a human victim resting on a throne, while about him the Eight Fierce Demons, clad in human skins and trampling on prostrate victims, attend their dread master. Everywhere are flames, skulls and severed heads, as a setting for which we have the sacred valley and river, with the Himalaya in the background.

Number 3 represents the "Great She-Devil," Devi, seated upon a mule and attended by other She-Devils clad like their mistress in human skins